

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for retrieving information over a packet switched network, the method comprising:

receiving a request message from a client for information;

forwarding a portion of the information to the client in response to the request message;

receiving a selection message specifying whether the remaining portion of the information should be retrieved; and

selectively forwarding the remaining portion of the information to the client.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the forwarding step comprises:

generating a response message that includes the portion of the information, the information being partitioned into a plurality of data types, the data types including viewable data, hidden data, encrypted data, and state data.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein selection message in the step of receiving the selection message includes encrypted data and state data associated with the information, the method further comprising:

decrypting the encrypted data; and

transmitting new visible data of the information.

4. The method according to claim 2, further comprising:

preparing billing and reporting information based upon the state data; and

generating a report based upon the state data.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the information is directory assistance information that includes a name field, and a directory number.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of forwarding is performed using a Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), the packet switched network being an Internet Protocol (IP) network.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
retrieving the requested information from a database.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the request message in the receiving step provides state information.

9. A server for providing information over a packet switched network, the server comprising:

a communication interface configured to receive a request message from a client for information; and

a processor coupled to the communication interface and configured to retrieve a portion of the information from a database in response to the request message,

wherein the communication interface receives a selection message from a client, the selection message specifying whether a remaining portion of the information should be retrieved, the remaining portion of the information being selectively forwarded to the client.

10. The server according to claim 9, wherein the processor generates a response message that includes the portion of the information, the information being partitioned into a plurality of data types, the data types including viewable data, hidden data, encrypted data, and state data.

11. The server according to claim 10, wherein selection message includes encrypted data and state data associated with the information, the processor decrypting the encrypted data and

instructing the transmission of new visible data of the information through the communication interface.

12. The server according to claim 10, wherein billing and reporting information is prepared based upon the state data.

13. The server according to claim 9, wherein the information is directory assistance information that includes a name field, and a directory number.

14. The server according to claim 9, wherein the communication interface is configured to use a Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) to communicate with the client, the packet switched network being an Internet Protocol (IP) network.

15. The server according to claim 9, wherein the request message provides state information.

16. A server for providing information over a packet switched network, the server comprising:

means for receiving a request message from a client for information;

means for forwarding a portion of the information to the client in response to the request message;

means for receiving a selection message specifying whether the remaining portion of the information should be retrieved; and

means for selectively forwarding the remaining portion of the information to the client.

17. The server according to claim 16, wherein the forwarding means comprises:

means for generating a response message that includes the portion of the information, the information being partitioned into a plurality of data types, the data types including viewable data, hidden data, encrypted data, and state data.

18. The server according to claim 17, wherein selection message includes encrypted data and state data associated with the information, the server further comprising:

means for decrypting the encrypted data; and

means for transmitting new visible data of the information.

19. The server according to claim 17, further comprising:

means for preparing billing information based upon the state data; and

means for generating a report based upon the state data.

20. The server according to claim 16, wherein the information is directory assistance information that includes a name field, and a directory number.

21. The server according to claim 16, wherein the forwarding means uses a Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), the packet switched network being an Internet Protocol (IP) network.

22. The server according to claim 16, further comprising:

means for retrieving the requested information from a database.

23. A communication system comprising:

a client configured to transmit a request message for information over a packet switched network; and

a server configured to communicate with the client and to forward a portion of the information to the client in response to the request message, wherein the client transmits a selection message specifying whether the remaining portion of the information should be

retrieved to the server, the server selectively forwarding the remaining portion of the information to the client.

24. The system according to claim 23, wherein the server generates a response message that includes the portion of the information, the information being partitioned into a plurality of data types, the data types including viewable data, hidden data, encrypted data, and state data.

25. The system according to claim 24, wherein selection message includes encrypted data and state data associated with the information, the server decrypting the encrypted data and transmitting new visible data of the information to the client.

26. The system according to claim 24, wherein the server prepares billing information and a report based upon the state data.

27. The system according to claim 23, wherein the information is directory assistance information that includes a name field, and a directory number.

28. The system according to claim 23, wherein the server uses a Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), the packet switched network being an Internet Protocol (IP) network.

29. The system according to claim 23, further comprising:  
a database communicating with the server, the database configured to store the requested information.

30. The system according to claim 23, wherein the request message provides state information, the server maintaining none of the state information.

31. A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of one or more instructions for retrieving information over a packet switched network, the one or more

sequences of one or more instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

- receiving a request message from a client for information;
- forwarding a portion of the information to the client in response to the request message;
- receiving a selection message specifying whether the remaining portion of the information should be retrieved; and
- selectively forwarding the remaining portion of the information to the client.

32. The computer-readable medium according to claim 31, wherein the forwarding step comprises:

- generating a response message that includes the portion of the information, the information being partitioned into a plurality of data types, the data types including viewable data, hidden data, encrypted data, and state data.

33. The computer-readable medium according to claim 32, wherein selection message in the step of receiving the selection message includes encrypted data and state data associated with the information, the one or more processors further performing the steps of:

- decrypting the encrypted data; and
- transmitting new visible data of the information.

34. The computer-readable medium according to claim 32, wherein the one or more processors further perform the steps of:

- preparing billing information based upon the state data; and
- generating a report based upon the state data.

35. The computer-readable medium according to claim 31, wherein the information is directory assistance information that includes a name field, and a directory number.

36. The computer-readable medium according to claim 31, wherein the step of forwarding is performed using a Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), the packet switched network being an Internet Protocol (IP) network.

37. The computer-readable medium according to claim 31, wherein the one or more processors further perform the step of:

retrieving the requested information from a database.

38. The computer-readable medium according to claim 31, wherein the request message in the receiving step provides state information.